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EXHIBIT 10
DATE 2-17-09
HB 314

February 16, 2009

House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee
Chairman Van Dyk

RE: Testimony on House Bill 314

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Jim Hagenbarth and I am a livestock producer from southwestern Montana. I have been involved with ranching for over 40 years and through this tenure have gained a lot of insight and have seen a lot of changes. Many of my old time neighbors have sold out for various reasons and have been replaced by new neighbors. These folks are generally not local, have a lot of money, can top any other bidders, know the value of what they purchase, and want to experience all the amenities produced by landowners who nurture open space. We do not have the right to tell these people they cannot come, but we do have the obligation to welcome, befriend and influence them by example. These new neighbors have been successful entrepreneurs and can help our communities with their wealth and their experience. We have witnessed their assistance often. Yet, many Montanans consider them "out-of-touch, out-of-state elitists who intend to purchase land and lock ordinary Montana sportsmen and women out". When a house in the neighborhood is sold, you do not walk in and expect the new occupants to treat you the same as the old ones did. You have to earn their respect and trust. We have done a very poor job of this and FW&Ps and their constituents have been the biggest offenders. They try to get things done through punitive actions, rather than positive incentives. If we do not turn this around, we are going to be in a lot of trouble. HB 314 is a prime example of what I am talking about. We have to do better than this. The people in the Madison Valley are attempting to and many other states have positive programs that accomplish amazing results. We need bottom up community efforts, rather than top down failures. I am opposed to HB 314. It is a continuing example of how the Fish and Game and their constituents are trying to force access, rather than earn it through good will.

Thanks for your attention and for serving as a legislator,

Jim Hagenbarth